

POPERY
A
Great Mystery
OF
INIQUITY.

PROVED

In a Sermon Preached in the Parish Church of
Newland, in the County of *Glocester*, on *Wednesday*
the 22^d. of *December*, 1680. being the *Fast-Day*,
appointed by the Kings Proclamation.

AND

Now Published for the sake of such secure Protestants that
will hardly believe there is a Popish Plot; or, that ever
it should take effect.

By THOMAS JEKYLL, M. A.
Preacher of the Gospel there.

*Mat. 10. 25. It is enough for the Disciple that he be as his Master, and
the Servant as his Lord; If they have called the Master of the house
Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?*

*Gal. 4. 16. Am I therefore become your Enemy, because I tell you the
Truth?*

LONDON, Printed for *Jonathan Robinson*, at the *Golden-Lyon*
in *St. Paul's Church-yard*, 1681.

T O T H E

Right Reverend Father in God,

R O B E R T,

Lord Bishop Ele&

O F

G L O C E S T E R.

May it please your Lordship,

Although the preaching of this Sermon, occasioned very great Clamors against me, by those from whom I little expected any such thing, and of whom I thought I had deserved better, yet I am not in the least sorry for it upon my own account, not only because I am well enough assured of my own innocent and Just intentions in it, but also because it hath given me an opportunity of being known to your Lordship, in which, tho' at the first, I may perhaps appear under the notion of a Criminal, yet I do not in the least question but that your Lordship's great Judgment and Integrity will easily acquit or

The Epistle Dedicatory.

justly Convince and Censure me, either of which, I hope I shall bear with Modesty and Submission; and therefore I am the more bold to appeal to your Lordship as my proper Ordinary, by whom alone I ought to be ordered, and to whom, as I have already sworn; so I am resolved to perform Obedience in all things that relate to the Dignity of your Lordships Place in the Church, or the Duty of my own; and therefore am,

My Lord,

Your Lordships

obedient Son

and Servant in the Gospel,

THO. JEKYL.

T O

To the Right Worshipful, the Master, and
Wardens, and Assistants of the Wor-
shipful Company of *Haberdashers* in
London.

May it please your worships,

Since I had the honour of being presented by your Worships to be Mr. *Jones's* Preacher at *Newland*, I have had the opportunity and satisfaction of being fully assured of the faithfulness and integrity in the management of all his Trusts in these parts; and not only so, but I have also had the profitable experience of many great and extraordinary kindnesses from you, in so much that as I have always admired and commended your Justice in the one, so I hope I shall ever with all gratitude acknowledge your goodness in the other; as a particular Testimony of which, I beseech your Worships to accept of this present Dedication of the following Sermon, which tho' it was baited into the World by the loud Clamors that were rais'd against it, yet it comes voluntarily to your Worships to make an humble offer of it self to your serious perusal and Service: and the Author is the more bold to send it on that particular errand, that you who are his worthy Patrons, may at once have some account how he spends his time, and what grateful apprehensions he hath of your noble Favours too, and if in this he may be any ways serviceable to your Faith, he will be the less concerned at what others say of himself, for tho' his Credit and Reputation are always dear to him, yet he is well contented to be reviled and reproached, so the interest of Christs Truth and Gospel may be advanced, especially if he may any ways contribute thereunto on your Worships behalf, for he is resolv'd always to endeavour and Pray for the Peace and Prosperity of all your worthy Society, because he is,

Your Worships most Obliged

and most Humble Servant

in the Gospel

THO. JEKYL.

*Newland,
Jan. 29 1681.*

THE PREFACE.

WHEN Cræsus's Dumb Son saw a private Soldier about to kill his Father, his Affection and Loyalty, forc'd him thro' all the Difficulties of a natural Impediment, to cry out in his defence. No wonder then if in far greater dangers one who (Blessed be God) hath no such defect, cannot hold his Peace, especially too when the Duty of his Place would make it highly Criminal to be Silent.

I had been sufficiently assured by all the publick Testimonies of the Nation, both in Church and State, that there had been a damnable Plot, Contrived and carry'd on by the Papists for many Years, to destroy the King, Subvert the Government, and Root out the true Protestant Religion; and when at the opening of this last Parliament, the King was pleased to recommend the farther Discovery and Prosecution of the Plot unto them, as one chief thing for which he called them together, and for the encouragement of their zeal in it, told them that he thought not himself as yet safe from the dangers of it, I thought I had no longer any reason to believe what I heard a Gentleman (then and now too in Authority) say, about two years since, to above an hundred People, whom he had gathered about him to that purpose, That tho' there had been a Damnable Plot, yet it was then so far discover'd and prevented that it was impossible it should ever take effect; and therefore next to the imploring the Divine aid, I thought it my Duty (as the most proper business of my Calling, and the best service I could do my Country) to Preach up Loyalty to the

The Preface.

the King, and to assert the truth and Justice of that Royal Supremacy, that is yielded to him by this Church and Realm, and to give such an account also of the pernicious Principles of Popery, as should both arm and caution the minds of those I had to do with against the taint and dangers of it; and I was the more encouraged in this design, not only from what I had heard abroad but also from what I had seen and observ'd my self about home, how much the men of that persuasion were indulg'd and countenanc'd, and those that appear'd zealous and brisk against them, Brow-beaten and threatned; and therefore the last Fast-day I took occasion to lay open and discover those depths of Satan, that Mystery of Iniquity from whence both our Fears and Dangers did proceed; and because I hinted at some particular things that had been done to the encouragement of that Faction, I was in a very rude manner clamour'd against about the Country, and very severe remarks were made (behind my back) both upon my Person and Sermon, all which I heard of, but took little notice, being very unwilling to believe any such things, till at last the Vicar of the Parish came to me and told me he was sent by a Justice of the Peace to ask me whether I did not mean him by two expressions in that Sermon, Of fetching away Arms by night, and giving Oaths in a Chimney-corner. I must confess I thought it a very odd kind of question upon all accounts, but since it was not ask'd in a sudden heat, but after ten days deliberation and noise, I told him that I did indeed speak words to that purpose, and that I would justify the truth of them, and that as things then stood, there was a necessity that I should speak as I did, but since I named nobody, if that Gentleman found himself guilty he might take it as he pleas'd, and that if he had sent privately to me at first I would have waited upon him, and given him a particular account of the whole matter, but that now since I had been so publickly defam'd and threatned I was resolv'd to appeal to my Ordinary, and to publish the whole matter to the world.

And this now is the only Reason I have for this Publication, which I hope will also be admitted for mine excuse

The Preface.

excuse, especially since I do here profess, that as I never thought anything of mine fit for the Press, so I never intended any such thing, much less in this which was designed only for a private Auditory; nor should my own particular Vindication have forced it from me now, for I would have lain still under all the personal Reproaches that could have been thrown upon me, but that I clearly saw, nay I found it by my own experience, how much the Protestant Religion suffer'd, and Popery was encourag'd, and prevail'd daily by such kind of Practises; for it's that, and only that which hath made me thus to discover and betray my own weakness. And for those Persons that took such great Offence at the Sermon, I do hereby assure them that I never intended to give them any, but only to prosecute the business that was before me with all faithfulness to God and his Church; and as for those few things which I did say (which are far short of what I knew) they are so worded on purpose to have prevented what after hapned, that the things themselves are excused in the same Sentence in which they are spoken; but if guilty minds will be offended when their faults are but mention'd, they may indeed, but I cannot help that; and therefore if they would have me forbear that part of the Duty of my Place and Calling, they must first forbear their making it so, that is, Reform and amend; for as long as Atheism and Popery, Faction and Hypocrisie grow Rampant and Head-strong under their Influence and Example, they must pardon me if I discharge my Trust, however they may neglect and betray theirs.

And as for this particular Sermon, if the World will but excuse and wink at the weakness which this necessary Publication forces me to discover in it, I'll ask nobody Pardon for the Preaching of it, because tho' it be homely yet it's true, and I shall be very apt upon the like Occasion to speak as much another time.

2 Thes. 2. 7.

For the Mystery of Iniquity doth already Work; only he who now Letteth, will Let, till he be taken out of the way.

How useful and necessary the most deep and solemn Humiliations that can be, are at all times for a sinful People, the Apprehensions which all men naturally have of the Justice and Power of God do sufficiently discover; And how fit and proper they are for us at this time, not only our manifold Sins and Wickednesses, but also those Great and Apparent Dangers wherewith we are compassed do abundantly declare too; And therefore since it hath pleas'd Almighty God by the Voice of Authority to call us to this great and important Work, let us in the first place bless his Name for giving of us such a Gracious King that takes such Care of our Religion and Government, and of the Lives and Souls of his People, as by such ways as these to procure Gods Favour and Protection, through whose infinite Goodness alone it is that we have all been hitherto preserv'd; and then let us endeavour so to behave our selves in the discharge of this Duty now, and of all others too in the several places which he hath set us in, that Glory may dwell in our Land, that the Life and Reign of our King may be Long and Prosperous, that the Gospel may for ever flourish in its native Plainness and Simplicity, and that Peace and Plenty may be the Glory and Blessings of these

these Nations. I know very well as our present Case stands we have very little Reason to expect any of these Kindnesses, the multitude and greatness of our Sins cry loud for Vengeance, we have thereby pluck'd at it with both our hands, and may truly say as the Prophet does, *Lam. 3. 21. that it is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not consumed, it is not because our Provocations fail but because his Compassions fail not.* How have we slighted his Judgments, abus'd his Mercies, and turn'd his Grace into Wantonness? making even his Goodness that should have lead us to Repentance, rather an Encouragement to continue in Sin; How hath he tried all ways to reclaim us, and how have we rendred them Fruitless and Vain? How often hath he varied the Methods of his Providence to see which was the most likely means to prevail upon us, and how have we still varied not only our Methods, but even our Manner of sinning, committing it with so much greediness, and variety of new invented and unheard of Practices, as if we would do it, not only out of a particular Love and Liking to it, but even out of a spight to God himself, because he hath forbidden it? and all this too amidst the greatest Hazzards, and nearest Approaches to Ruine and Destruction, and such too as we have been forced to see and acknowledge whether we would or no. How hath Almighty God even by Miracle discover'd to us our Danger, and hitherto as it were constrain'd us to accept of a Deliverance, whilst we have even striven against both; not only by shutting our Eyes against the clearest Light and Evidence, but by hard'ning our Hearts in sin against the strongest Convictions, as if we would rather stand to the Courtesie of our Enemies who have so often vow'd our Destruction, than be any longer beholden to the Providence of God that hath so often interpos'd for our Preservation? Certainly (my beloved) this is not the way to make our selves a happy People, for though there were no danger from Men either at home or abroad, yet as long as we continue in Sin we are always

ways in danger; for tho' *Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth Trouble spring out of the ground, tho' we see no Cloud arise, or the least probability of any evil coming upon us to make us afraid, yet as long as we continue in Sin, we are surrounded with Dangers, and the Vengeance of God will in time bring upon us both sure and swift Destruction; But since the Case is otherwise with us, and we are made to see how Ruine and Desolation stand gaping with open mouth upon us, ready to devour and swallow us up, and all that's dear to us, how ought we indeed to humble our souls before God, to break off our sins by Repentance, and our Iniquities by doing of good, that it may be a lengthening of our Tranquility; that so that Mystery of Iniquity that hath been working ever since the Apostles days, may be at once both fully reveal'd, and destroy'd too; and the rather because it is still at work even amongst us, for the Mystery of Iniquity doth already work, only he that letteth, will let, till he be taken out of the way.*

In the handling of which Words I shall endeavour by Gods Grace to shew, 1. What is meant by the Mystery of Iniquity here spoken of. 2. How it work'd then in the Apostles days. 3. How it works now. 4. What it is that hinders its full Growth and Power of acting as it would; And then 5. by way of Application shew how far this may concern us now, and what improvement we are to make of it.

1. What is meant by this Mystery of Iniquity? There is I confess great difference amongst Expositors what it is in Particular, however all in general that I have met with, both Papists and Protestants, conclude it to be the Work and Power of Antichrist: but now who, and what that is, is the great question amongst them. Dr. Hammond applies it to Simon Magus and the Doctrine of the Gnosticks; Grotius to Caligula and the Rules and Principles of his Politicks; but though I shall always have a just Honor and Esteem for their Judgments and Learn-

ing, yet in this Case I shall crave leave to understand something more by it; not but what they offer doth in many things very well agree with the Apostles Words and Sense in this Chapter, but yet they do in my Apprehension, not so well agree therewith as the Common Opinion of other Learned and Sober Protestants doth; for they generally understand by it the Principles of Popery; and their Sense is so far to be relied upon, in that all things concerning it in this Chapter agree very well thereto, as I question not, but by the serious examination of the several parts of it will also fully appear to you; especially if you please to take notice of three things therein, as 1. The first rise and appearance of it, in what manner it began, 2. The work it self as it was then in some measure discover'd to the World, and hath since been more fully known and understood; And 3. the way and means of its Growth and Increase. All which you will find so exactly agreeable to this very thing, that one would think the Apostle had written the Relation of what it is now, rather than the Prophecie of what in after-times it should be.

1. Then, let us consider the first Rise and Appearance of it. In the beginning of this Chapter the Apostle discovers, and cautions the *Thessalonians* against a very dangerous Error crept in amongst them, of limiting and determining the very Period of Time, concerning our Saviours coming; either (as Dr. Hammond thinks) to punish and destroy the Nation of the Jews, for rejecting him and his Doctrine; or (as others) to judge the whole World it self; the danger of which (if they should live to see themselves Confuted by the Event) he foresaw would be very great, and not only stagger, but overthrow the Faith of some, yea, and it may be, ruine all; he therefore tells them, v. 3. that that time was not so near as they imagin'd, but that there were some forerunners of it that should sufficiently proclaim its Approach, *let no man (saith he) deceive you by any means, for that day shall*

shall not come except there come a falling away first, there must be some great Apostacy from the Christian Faith into Idolatry before then; for so the Word ἀποστασία, doth in that place signifie. It's true in its common and ordinary acceptation it signifies, a Defection or Departure from somewhat that we formerly own'd and defended, a withdrawing of subjection from some Supreme Power, which when it relates to Men and Civil Affairs, it signifies Revolt and Rebellion, but when it relates to God and Religion, it signifies a spiritual Revolt and Rebellion against God; and because that is seen most in Idolatry above all other sins, it being not only a Neglect and Contempt of God as all other sins are, but also a direct Opposition against him, by setting up others in his room and place; therefore it is here and elsewhere in the New Testament set to signifie Christian Idolatry (as the Learned Mr. Mede doth sufficiently make it appear.) Christianity is in the 9th. verse of the first Chapter of the former Epistle called *a turning to God from Idols*, and therefore this Apostacy or falling away must then by the Rule of Contraries, signifie a returning from God to the Worship and Service of Idols, and if it be so where now is this Apostacy more manifest than in the Church of Rome? where Saints and Reliques, Crucifixes and Pictures, yea Images and Altars are Worship'd with the same kind of Worship that God himself is; nay rather than want an Object to abuse to Idolatry, they can make one every day, as appears plainly in the Breaden-God in the Mals that is so devoutly Worship'd, and if this be not a foul Apostacy, indeed I know not what is. But let us consider,

2. The Work it self as it was then in the Apostles days discovered to the World, This is mentioned at the 4th. verse where the *Man of Sin* that should give occasion to this Apostacy is said to *oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or is Worshipped*. By which expressions we may understand either,

1. Those things that God hath lent his Name and Titles.

cles to, which are therefore called Gods; (for as St. Paul saith, *there be Gods many and Lords many*) such as are the Civil Powers of the World called often in Scripture Gods, as *Exod. 22. 28. Thou shalt not revile the Gods*, that is, the Magistrates and Rulers of the World. And this Title our Saviour himself gives them, *John 10. 34. Is it not written in your Law I said ye are Gods?* Now over these it is notoriously and shamefully known what Power the Popes of Rome have for several of these last Ages usurp'd; to make them attend at Processions, at Mass, at their Table, yea to hold their Stirrups, as *Adrian the 4th.* made the Emperor *Frederick Barbarossa*, in which Service because he did not hold the right Stirrup, he was severely check'd, and could hardly be forgiven; though he pleaded his Ignorance in not being used to such Services for his Excuse. Nay to shew how absolute a Tyranny they can exercise not only over the Persons but the Dominions and Territories of Princes, these have been as insolently and unjustly dispos'd of too; absolving their Subjects from all Oaths of Allegiance and Fidelity, and giving their Kingdoms to such as the Pope pleaseth, and making of it meritorious to Depose and Murder them; as if when our Saviour told his Disciples what kind of Power the Princes of the Gentiles exercised over their Subjects, he gave them Authority to exercise the same over Princes themselves, whereas it is sufficiently evident from *Math. 20. 25, 26.* that he did really intend the quite contrary. This part of Antichrist's work I confess was not so publickly known in the Apostles days as it hath been since, however some beginning of it there were then to be seen in that Ambitious Desire of Preheminence, which *Diotrephes* and the rest of his Temper discovered about that time. But

2. If by that which is called God, and which Antichrist opposeth himself against, we understand God himself, and what comes from him, such as are all the Principles of his Religion, the Obligation of his Laws, and the Methods of his Worship, or what ever else he is pleased to

to make himself known unto the World by; the Case will then appear to be as plain as it was before, since the Popes have made as much bold with the Laws of God as ever they did with those of any private Prince whatsoever. Have not they oftentimes arrogated to themselves a Power not only to dispense with the Divine Laws, but even to change the very nature of Goodness it self, not only like the *Pharisees* in our Saviours time making *Math. 15* the Laws of God of none effect by their Traditions, but making other Laws in Opposition to them, and yet blasphemously pretending to give them as great a Sanction; How do they put light for darkness and darkness for light, call evil good and good evil, in making moral Evils become Vertues and Meritorious; such as Perjury, Murder, Treason, and Rebellion, or any other Wickedness whatsoever that the practice of, shall make for their Interest and Advantage? And what is all this but an Arrogant Assumption of the Title and Power of God? well therefore may the Pope be stiled as by his flatterers he often is, Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, yea and God too, *alter numen in terris; & Dominus Deus noster Papa.* But,

3. Let us consider the way and means of the Growth, and Increase of this Mystery of Iniquity; and that in the 9th. verse is said to be by the Power of Signs and Lying Wonders, and if so, where shall we find more of these than in the Church of Rome? what a just Veneration we ought to have for true and real Miracles, I need not tell you, since by these we have the strongest Confirmation of our Faith and Religion that can be; but now to pretend to these when the very reason of them is taken away, is to engage the Power of God to needless things, which is a very high piece of Confidence and Presumption indeed, but to do it at the rate of that Church is to engage that Almighty Power to do not only vain but ridiculous things, yea and impious things too; the Miracles which they pretend to, are not only Counterfeit and False, but Wicked and Blasphemous, for in many of them

them they engage God Almighty against himself, and frequently make his Saints to do the Devils work. They talk highly of the great Esteem they have for the Blessed Virgin, and yet they sometimes tell such Stories of her Apparitions and Miracles, as make but very little for her Credit.

One of them tells us how she came and acted the part of a Midwife to a certain Abbess that had plaid the Whore, and was got with Child, and that she sent the Bastard away presently by two Angels to a certain Hermit to be brought up. Another tells us that she supplied a Nuns place for twelve years together, whilst she went every night to play the Whore in the Stews. What strange Stories do they tell us of the Bones and Garments of Martyrs, what Cures they have done, what Miracles they have wrought not only upon the living, but the dead too, too tedious for me to mention, or you to hear at this time, and one would think, too Ridiculous and Absurd for any Rational Creatures to pretend to believe and admire; but *1 Tim. 2. 2.* that the Apostle tells us verse 11th. of some to whom God shall send strong Delusions that they should believe Lies, and of others whose Consciences are sear'd with an hot Iron, whose Character which he also there gives, doth so well agree to these Persons and Principles I am speaking of, that nothing can do it more; besides which there's another Text of Scripture that doth so plainly agree to this Mystery of Iniquity that I cannot pass it by. It is *Rev. 17. 5.* where St. John in his Description of the great Whore Riding upon a Beast with seven Heads, which he explains to signify seven Mountains, agreeable to the Situation of Rome, tells us amongst other things that do also agree to the Rise and Growth of the Papal Sovereignty, That upon the Forehead of the great Whore the word *Mystery* is written, which may very well be understood of the Pope himself, since upon his Mitre the word *Mystery* was also written.

2. How did this Mystery of Iniquity work in the Apostles

postles days? It's true Popery was not then what it is now, then it was but in its Infancy, now it is arrived to a fuller growth; then it was only the Spawn or Child of the Devil, but now it is grown to the Stature of the Man of Sin; and this it hath arrived to by certain Steps and Degrees, for *nemo repente fit turpissimus*, nothing is at the worst all at once; therefore the Phrase *already work* shewed only its beginning to act, whereby afterwards it was able more strongly to put forth it self. It appear'd to the Apostle in those Errors and Heresies which then crept into the Church even in his time, which were indeed the forerunners of Antichrist, such as were that Emulation amongst Pastors, and the Factious siding with them mentioned *1 Cor. 1. 11, 12. Chap. 3. 3, 4. 21, 22. 3 John 9. 10.* for this desire of sovereign Supremacy was a strong favor of the Spirit of Antichrist indeed; insomuch that when John Patriarch of Constantinople challenged to himself the Title of Universal Bishop, he was strongly opposed in it by Gregory the Great, (who is esteemed the last of the good Popes, and the first of the bad) and that so stiffly too, as that he affirms that whoever should offer to take to himself that Title, was the forerunner of Antichrist; and yet Boniface the Third that succeeded him next but one, did Usurp it, and his Successors have endeavoured to keep it ever since. Another thing that this Mystery of Iniquity began to discover it self by, was a Voluntary Humility, which hath since improved it self into so many Pennances and Pilgrimages, the Worshipping of Saints and Angels, forbidding to Marry, and distinguishing of Meats. *Col. 2. 18. 23. 1 Tim. 4. 1. 3.* to these also may be added the mixtures of Heathen Idolatry with Christian Services, which the Apostle cautions the *Corinthians* against, *1 Cor. 10. 14.* and following verses; all which

with greater Advantage are Improv'd and Practis'd in the Church of *Rome* to this day; well therefore might the Apostle call it a *Mystery*, because of its secret Work, *creeping in* as it were *unawares*, and so far it remains a Mystery still in that it works with all possible Art and subtlety, notwithstanding the great Power and Strength it now has, and how long it will be suffer'd to do so, God only knows.

3. How doth this Mystery of Iniquity work now? and indeed this is a thing fit for us to enquire into, that so we may prevent (if possible) our being enshar'd by it, and we have the more Reason to do so, because it's now grown more strong and confident, more plain and open, and yet no less cunning and subtle, and by consequence far more dangerous; several ways therefore we shall find it work, but more particularly these five, 1. By Corrupt Principles, 2. By Subornations, Lies, and Perjuries, 3. By Cruelty and bloody Practises, 4. by Incredulity, and 5. By good Natur'd if not treacherous Connivances.

1. It works by Corrupt Principles; so indeed it did then, and this way chiefly, because it had neither Strength nor Opportunity to do otherwise, but yet those Principles then were neither so many, nor so bad as they are now; they were then only such as misled men into Error from some points of Faith, and only at a distance, and that secretly too, giving Liberty and Encouragement to sinful Practises; but these now are such as Corrupt and Debauch mens Minds, that do directly undermine and overthrow all Gospel-Rules and Precepts of Holy Living; they are such as tend to the Indulging of the Flesh, to the Inflaming of our Lusts, to the Humouring of our Corrupt Inclinations, and to the Encouraging of all manner of Evil in the World, and that I do them no wrong, give me leave but to mention some few of them,

them, and you will plainly see the undoubted Truth of what I say. The first is that of the Popes Power of granting Pardons, Dispensations and Indulgences; in and by which the most Sacred Laws of God are Cancell'd and made of no Force and Vertue, Incest and Adultery are dispens'd with, Lies and Perjuries are made Duties and Commendable Things; Murder, Treason and Rebellion lose all their *Odium* and Horror, and become presently the highest Accomplishments of a Christian, and the best Qualifications of a Saint; there being no evil at all in them, but when they are discover'd and prevented; but this I can the easier forgive them, because it gave the happy Occasion of the Reformation so seasonably begun, and so vigorously and successfully Prosecuted in *Germany* by *Luther*; only I cannot but take notice, what a pretty Faculty it has, of picking mens Purses whilst they themselves look on, and are willing to be cheated of their Mony as long as they may be let alone, nay encourag'd in their Sins; and indeed what can do it better than such a Device? for who need fear to commit any Sin when a Purse-Penance will expiate it! Of the same Indulgent Nature with this, is that Principle of Auricular Confession, in which if I do but Acknowledge and whisper my sins into the Ears of the Priest, I shall be absolv'd without any other Repentance than a little Penance enjoyn'd me by him, whom too the Bounty of my Purse shall make as Indulgent to me and my sins as can be. It is already concluded amongst their Casuists that Attrition without Contrition is enough to deserve an Absolution, *i. e.* if a man be but sorry for Sin, because it will bring him to Hell it shall be sufficient without any other Ingredient in his Repentance. The distinction they have made between Mortal and Venial, is another that tends not a little to looseness and sensuality, especially

ally too when there's no sin so Mortal, but a liberal hand shall make it Venial too, and therefore no wonder if this Mystery of Iniquity prevail so easily upon sensual and carnal Men.

2. This Mystery of Iniquity works now by Subornation, Lies and Perjuries. These are used to prevent the discovery of their wicked Practises, and thereby to bring Credit to their Cause; for they have still so much Modesty and Ingenuity left in spite of all those Arts that have been used to root out both, as to stand up stiffly in their own Defence, and make shew of the greatest Abhorrence of any of those vile Practices which the more sober part of Mankind do exclaim against; none pretending a greater regard to their Credit and Reputation than they do; which when the discovery of their evil Practises is like to blast, they can then with Oaths and Imprecations not only deny all, but even stand it out too to the very death, as our late Traytors have done and still do; and tho' their Guilt be never so plain and palpable, they are so far from taking *Josbua's* Counsel, and giving Glory to God by making Confession, that they will rather rob him of as much as possibly they can by an impudent Denial; Lying for the Catholick Cause (as it's call'd) is so far a venial Sin, that it carries its own Absolution along with it; and therefore it is that they have so often had Recourse thereto. How often have they reported that several sober and well minded Protestants died mad, and could have no rest or quiet till they were Reconcil'd to their Church; amongst which *Beza* himself shall serve for an Example, of whom it was publickly divulg'd abroad that he did so, but it pleas'd Almighty God so far to restore him to his Health again, as to enable him to live to Confute that Calumny sufficiently. They tell us that Faith is not indeed to be kept with Hereticks, and they have so far made it

good

good still as never to do it any longer than it was for their Advantage; but then methinks they should not belye these Hereticks, and make them worse than they are; yes, rather than want a specious pretence for their Falshood and Cruelty towards them, they will find out one way or other to make them seem to deserve it, *Cranmer*, *Ridly*, *Latimer*, and the rest of our Protestant Martyrs must be call'd Rebels against the Queen, and their Murders justified, as if they were burnt for Rebellion and not for Religion, when there was no such thing laid to their Charge, nor any pretence for it; for if there had, we should certainly have heard of it often and long enough agoe. Nay what pains have they lately taken to make this appear in those endeavours that have been used to thro' their own devillish Plot upon the Protestants? The Presbyterians were to bear the blame then, and I question not, but they kno' well enough where to lay it yet if the Cursed Design of Murdering the King should take Effect, which God Almighty for ever prevent. But

3. This Mystery of Iniquity works by Cruelty and Bloody Practices; and of these the Histories almost of all Countries do afford us many dreadful Examples; for they use Art and Cunning only where they want Power, which when once obtain'd, no Tyger is half so Barbarous and Savage. Racks and Tortures, Fire and Sword are their common and ordinary Mercies, which without any regardh ad to Age or Sex they do without the least relenting most inhumanly Exercise, to destroy all that oppose their damnable Doctrines and Hellish Devices; as in the French Massacre, the Irish Rebellion, the Spanish Inquisition, and the rest of their bloody Persecutions both at home and abroad may easily be seen; what farther Designs they have ever since the Reformation had upon this Kingdom, I need not tell you, being so happily prevented, by that seasonable

sonable Discourse thereof in the Morning, but I cannot but take notice with what Bloody Purposes and Resolutions they were all taken up and mannaged. I remember how when the Prophet told *Hazael* what barbarous Work he should afterwards make amongst the Children of *Israel*; Firing their Cities, destroying their Armies, ripping up their Women with Child, and dashing out their Childrens Brains; he answers with the greatest Abhorrence of such Cruelty, and *is thy Servant a Dog that he should do so*, 2. concluding that whoever should be so Barbarous must divest himself of all Humanity first; and yet these persons can do all this and a great deal more too without the least Pity or Compassion, yea and Glory in it also, as the Pope and Cardinals did for the French Massacre and the Irish Rebellion; and as in particular Pope *Sixtus* the fifth did in a set Speech to his Cardinals upon the murder of *Henry* the Third of *France*, in which he doth highly magnifie that horrid Fact of *Faques Clement* who did it; and I the rather mention this Instance, because *Lewis* the Priest that was lately Executed in the next County, did at his death in his Speech before his Execution, as in the printed Coppy of it I have seen, particularly mention *Clement* and *Ravillac* as Impious Villains, and that they were justly punish'd for their Horrid Crimes, and that their wicked Facts are generally detested by all Roman Catholics; which I must confess I did at first wonder at, because I little expected to hear such a thing from one that had the Repute of a Schollar, imagining that that Speech of *P. Sixtus* being publickly printed and sold at *Paris* and *Rome* too, could not be unknown to him; but when I consider'd what place he was reputed to hold amongst the Jesuits, my wonder quickly ceas'd; for I lookt upon it as a part of the same Plot that the rest of that infernal Crew are carrying on amongst us,

us, in which how good natur'd and harmless they intend to be, we may plainly apprehend from the beginning of the Tragedy it self, as it has been already acted in the murder of Justice *Godfry*, and was intended also in the Assault upon Mr. *Arnold*; these we kno' and have seen, and what more remains behind we may easily guess, when the murder of the King himself is one chief part of the Design. But

4. This Mystery of Iniquity works also by the Incredulity of Protestants themselves; for even they against whom it doth most discover it self do strangely encourage and help it forward, the common Principles of Humanity are so improv'd by the merciful Disposition of their Religion, that they cannot easily believe that ever there should be such horrid Monsters amongst men as some of the zealous Bigots of the Popish Party have been; and this these men kno' very well, and therefore it's one part of their Politicks to make their Crimes as great and barbarous as they can, that so their Stout and Resolute Denials of them, may be the sooner believ'd, and by consequence the Wickedness it self the easier done. This is plain in the History of the Irish Rebellion, in which the Author of it tells us, that though some curious and quick-sighted persons suspected some Design against them, nay had private hints of it given to them, yet they would not believe it; by which foolish Incredulity they were the easier destroy'd and murder'd. Was it not so too in the French Massacre, before which there being some reason to apprehend some approaching Danger, yea and some warning of it given to the Admiral himself, yet so great was their security in their too easie belief of the French Oaths and Protestations to the contrary, that with the greatest imaginable in a very short space at least 100000 of them were cruelly massacre'd; all which and a great deal more

more too, might for all the first discoveries of the Plot have been acted upon us long before this time, had not Almighty God prevented it, by suffering these Romish Wolves to act some part of it; as if it had been on purpose design'd to make us believe it whether we would or no. For how few were there amongst us that believ'd it till Justice *Godfry's* Murder? nay for all that, how many have there yet been that have not a little question'd the Truth of it, by which means the Authors and Contrivers of these Villanies have been strangely encourag'd to go on still in their Wickedness; but if there should be any person now that should make the least doubt of it after the Attestation of so many Proclamations from the King, so many Votes and Orders of both Houses of Parliament, so many Executions of Justice upon Legal and Impartial Tryals, and so many Pious and well compos'd Prayers by the Bishops (who can hardly be suppos'd to mock God with such Lies, if they were not sufficiently satisfied of the Truth and Certainty of the Evidence) I say, after all these, if any should in the least question the Truth of the thing, I shall not be afraid to declare my Opinion of such, that they are either in the Plot themselves, or wish well to it. But

5. This Mystery of Iniquity works now by good-natur'd if not Treacherous Connivances. Blessed be God we have good Laws against this Mystery of Iniquity, and all its Abettors, but I cannot say they are so well executed, whereby these men are encourag'd, and grown bold and impudent. What Liberty have they enjoy'd since the King came in? what Access to his Royal Person and Court; what Freedom and Ease have they still had from all troublesome and chargeable Offices; yea how freely have they enjoy'd the Exercise of their Religion without any considerable Inter-

Interruption, whilst other Protestant Dissenters in many places of the Kingdom were both fin'd and imprison'd? yea since the discovery of this Horrid Plot, what favour have they had for all that in many Places of the Land? some of which we our selves kno' and have seen: have not the great Opposers of them been discourag'd and Brow-beaten, call'd Factious and Seditious? and all this and more too even in the presence of Papists, as if it were done on purpose to encourage them to go on still in their way; How have they been harbour'd and entertain'd, I had almost said, Protected against the Laws? what sleight searches have been made for Arms, and those too carried away in the night? nay, what's more, the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy tend'red to, and taken by some of them in a Chimney Corner. More I could say to this purpose, but I forbear, because I would fain hope it was done out of Zeal and not Design, and that since things are now so plain we shall hear no more of such partiality; nor had I spoken it now, but that I am sure that such Practices do mightily strengthen and encourage that Party. For as long as there be any that either fear or favour them, or will become Pentioners to them, we can never be safe from their cursed Conspiracies and bloody Plots. But here I would not be mistaken as if I had an Intention, to provoke to any bloody and barbarous proceedings against them; No, I would not have the least hair of their Heads touch'd meerly for their Religion; I would have only the best care taken against the Mischiefs of it, against the bloody Principles which they have made so considerable a part of it; and therefore it's a great mistake in them (I wish it be not a wilful one) to say, that their Priests and others that have of late been justly Executed, dye for Religion; no, it's for Treason; and if indeed that be a part of their Religion, I wish them

more such Martyrs. For my part considering them barely as Papists I would have no more done to them, than I would have done to my self were I in their Case; for I would in the first place give the best security to the Government that possibly I could; I would keep still at home, and never go above five miles from thence without special leave; I would freely surrender all my Arms, and not keep so much as a Dagger or Pistol, no nor a Knife neither if the Government thought it not fit for me; I would renounce and abjure all wicked and treasonable Principles; and if any Oaths or Tests were requir'd that were contrary to my Judgment or Conscience, I would either get leave to depart the Realm, or stay, and as cheerfully as I could submit to the Penalties of the Law; however I would by no means Resist or Rebel, or do any thing (as near as I could, and as far as God should enable me) to dishonor him or his Truth, tho' I save both Life and Estate by it; And thus I would commit my Cause to God, and if I did suffer it should be *for well doing and not for ill*; and this I say I would do were I now in their Case; nay, this I would do were the Power in their hands, and Popery the establish'd Religion of the Nation; (which God grant may never be, and which as long as the King Lives I do not in the least fear) but if such a heavy Judgment should befall us (as I know our sins have deserv'd it) I should think my Condition very well, and be thankful for it, if I might but be suffer'd to do as I have said, for I desire always to make that Golden Rule of *doing as I would be done unto*, the Constant Measure of all my Actions. But

4. What is it that hinders the full Growth and Power of this Mystery of Iniquity? For the better understanding of which it will not be amiss to consider what it was that hindred in the Apostles days, and that will the more easily shew us what it is that hinders it in
ours;

ours; now that which hindred its Growth and Increase then was the Power of the Roman Empire, which still kept it under that it could never grow to any great Height; the Emperors of *Rome* were too Potent and Strong, too Watchful and Politick, and too great Enemies to Christianity in general to suffer any of the Professors of it to grow any ways Great and Formidable in the World: but as soon as that Power began to decline, as it did in the *East* by the prosperous Advance of the Turks, and in the *West* by the Invasion of the Goths and Vandals, and other barbarous Nations, this Mystery of Iniquity presently began to appear unmask'd, and to shew the World plainly that it was the Principles of Popery that made up the greatest part of it; for the Popes or Bishops of *Rome* taking Advantage from the Translation of the Imperial Seat to *Constantinople*, whereby the Power of the Empire was greatly weakned in *Italy*, began presently to set up for themselves, and to exercise that Tyrannical Power over mens persons, Estates and Consciences which they have since with so much Cruelty endeavour'd to maintain. For it was about the year 600, that *Boniface* the Third took upon him the Title of Universal Bishop, and then began that Tyranny to be publickly acted, which was before both begun and carried on by stealth. By the Considerations of which you may soon perceive what it is that hinders its full Growth and Power amongst us; and that we may easily conclude to be the Civil Government, by the power of which the Reformation here in *England* first began, and the Protestant Religion is establish'd and upheld; and so far it will hinder the Increase and Growth of Popery, that as long as it continues as it is, it is impossible that Popery should ever prevail long amongst us; and therefore those persons that endeavour to bring it in here, are still plotting against the Government
it

it self, which because they know it's too secure and firm as long as the King Lives, they resolve to destroy and murder him first; and so far their devilish Politicks are right and firm; for there's nothing (under God) that keeps out this Mystery of Iniquity, but the Life of the King, and the Power and Strength of those wholesome and good Laws against it, that are now so rivitted into the Civil Government as to become a great, nay the greatest Defence of it; and therefore it's Ridiculous to offer to Introduce Popery without the utter subversion of it; this they know too well, and are therefore so resolutely bent against it; but I hope to God this hind'rance will always be in their way, and that that which thus letteth, will let, and shall never be taken out of the way. But

5. By way of Application, In which let us see what Improvement we are to make of all this.

1. Then, Is Popery such a Mystery of Iniquity? let us Detest and Abhor it, as indeed upon all Accounts it very well deserves, but more especially upon these two, 1. Because it is so bad a thing in it self, and 2. Because we have known better.

1. Because it is so bad a thing in it self, it is so Horrid and Barbarous, so Ridiculous and Absurd, so Low and Sordid in its own Nature, that an Ingenuous and truly Generous Spirit that will be at the pains to consider it aright, cannot but cast it off with Loathing and Indignation; I might instance in several particulars wherein the Truth of this will manifestly appear, but I shall confine my self only to four.

1. It's a Sordid and Slavish Religion. It exercises not only a Cruel but an Unmanly Tyranny over its chiefest Votaries, putting them upon the poorest and basest Employments that can be, and requiring from them such a blind Obedience to all things that are impos'd upon them, as is absolutely contrary to that noble freedom

freedom of Mind, that the Laws of Nature, and the Principles of Christianity do allow and encourage. True Religion is generous and free, all the Precepts and Principles of it are most agreeable to the highest and most refin'd Reason; it never in the least Abridges us of the most perfect Liberty that is in the World; its greatest Restraints are only from slavish and unmanly things; it confines us to nothing that doth not help to make up a perfect Freedom, therefore well saith the *Psalmist*, uphold me with thy free Spirit, or as it is in the Margent, let the free or princely Spirit uphold me; but now Popery is of another Temper, there is but little of a free or princely Spirit in it; it's a perfect Usurpation and Tyranny over all that a man is or hath in the World, neither his Person nor his Purse, no nor his most secret Thoughts and Conscience are free, but all subjected to its Vassalage. What an absolute Sovereignty it exerciseth over mens Persons, is sufficiently discover'd in those long and tedious Pilgrimages, which they have been sent upon; in those severe and bloody Pennances which they have been enjoyn'd, as if every Priest was an Ecclesiastical Centurion, and had a command like his, that could but say to one go, and he goeth, tho' it be never so far, to another come, and he comes, tho' it's from never so remote a place, and to a third do this, and he doth it, tho' it be never so sordid and barbarous a thing. Nor are they less sparing of mens Estates, witness their costly Oblations, large Mortuaries, their chargeable Masses for the dead, their Purse-Pennances to save the Carcasses of the Living, and the dear Purchases to redeem Souls out of Purgatory; but all this is nothing to that Tyranny they exercise over mens Thoughts and Consciences. These now have been in all Ages look'd upon as free and subject unto none but God, till these Lordly and Insulting Priests pretended

tended a Commission from him to inspect and command them; since which they have impos'd new Articles of Faith that were never thought of by Christ or his Apostles; such as are the Worshipping of Images, Invocation of Saints, the Papal Supremacy and Infallibility, together with that great Hobgoblin of all Transubstantiation, and the rest that are enjoyn'd by that Church; after which they may impose what they please, since for ought I can see at this rate all is their own.

2. It is a cheating Religion. Gain is indeed the greatest part of its Godliness according to that old and true saying *Omnia Roma venalia*, any thing may be had at Rome for Money, there you may buy Pardons for sin, *Jesus Christ*, Heaven and Happiness, yea God himself, and indeed any thing but Sanctifying Grace; we read that *the Redemption of a Soul is Precious*, and that *none tho' ever so rich, can by any means redeem his Brother, or give to God a Ransom for him*, but these men tell us that if you have but Money enough, you may redeem Thousands. Our Saviour says that *it is easier for a Camel to go thro' the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; but they say it's much harder for a poor man to do it. St. James tells us that *God hath chosen the Poor of this World*, but they tell us that God hath rejected them. The Prophet *Isaiab* makes a free and liberal offer without Money and without Price of spiritual Blessings and Graces to all that shall in a due and right manner come for them, but this sure is Old-Testament Divinity, nay down-right *Apocripha* at Rome; It's this therefore that makes them so outrageous against Protestants, more than against Turks and Jews, because they have discover'd these Cheats, and will not be impos'd upon any longer by them; our Case being much like that of the Apostles at *Ephesus*, where the fierce Clamor

was

was rais'd against him, was by *Demetrius* and the Craftsmen, who upon the prevailing of the Gospel were like to want Imployment, and to lose all the Wealth that came in by their Trade of making *Silver Shrines*, or Cabinets of silver, for the lesser Images of *Diana*; and so indeed do these men who have the greatest part of their Livelyhood, from such kind of crafty Devices as these, and are therefore angry with us because we will not take their false Wares off their hands. And indeed who can be so sottish as to think that money has this Power? none sure but those who as the Apostle tells us are *given up to strong Delusions to believe Lies*. They call these I know *pia Fraudes*, pious Cheats, how pious they are I cannot say, but I am sure they are as great Cheats as any are in the World; but they alledge St. Pauls Example and Expression for their Justification, for he tells the *Corinthians* that *being crafty he caught them with Guile*, but certainly he never meant this kind of profitable Guile, this spiritual sleight of hand this devout way of picking of Pockets, for in the next words he freely acquits himself of any such Design or Practice. *Did I or Titus or any that I sent unto you make a Gain of you?* no I was so far from it that I would rather spend and be spent for you. St. Peter also was of another mind, tho' his pretended Successors think it not fit to follow his steps; for he forewarns the Church of Christ of those *false Prophets that should thro' Covetousness make Merchandise of them*, but to these I may say as he did to *Simon Magus* when he offer'd Money for the Gifts of the holy Ghost, *their Money Perish with them*.

3. It's a wicked and licentious Religion, giving the greatest Encouragement to sin that can be, witness the publick Stews that are tolerated in Rome it self, paying yearly a Tax of many thousand Ducats to the Pope. Paul the Third had a List of 45000 Courtezans in

pay

pay under him at one time, and therefore Pope *Sixtus* built large and noble Lodgings for them; and indeed no wonder if such a sort of Cattle be encourag'd and provided for, many of the Popes themselves being notoriously Guilty of shameful Adulteries, and foul Incest; all which is necessarily encourag'd in them, in forbidding their Priests to marry, and rather allowing them to keep as many Whores as they can maintain, the deepest Guilt of which is easily wip'd off by a Pardon, if not Anticipated by an Indulgence; nay, the truth on't is, these Pardons and Indulgences give the greatest encouragement to Sensuality and vile Lust that can be. And this *Roger Holland* a Martyr declar'd to Bishop *Bonner* himself. Whilst, says he, I was of your Religion I never cared what sins I committed, trusting to the Priests Pardon and Absolution; Drunkenness and Uncleannefs were no sins with me. And the like might be said of many others too, who I am confident had never been so bad if the Principles of their Religion and the hopes of easie Pardons had not made them so. Our Saviour bids the man that he had heal'd go his way and sin no more lest a worse thing come unto him, but the Language of these Pardon-Mongers is, sin as often as you please you kno' the Price, it is but the same again, and all's well. Many other Instances I could give to confirm this were it needful, and the time would give leave, but I shall sum up all under this general head, which you may Report where you please, and I'll justify the Truth of it out of their own Authors whenever I am required to do it, That there is no sin whatsoever but if it tend to Advance the Interest of the Church of *Rome*, it shall be Pardon'd and Indulg'd, yea and made Meritorious, and that this is the Principle and Practice of that Church, I say again I shall be ready at all times to make it appear out of their

their own Authors whenever they shall deny it.

4. It is a Treasonable and Bloody Religion. That Subjection and Loyalty to the Supreme Civil Powers is a Christian Duty, that Magistracy is of Divine Institution, and that Kings have an undoubted Right of Supremacy even in Causes and over Persons Ecclesiastical, I have already and very lately in several Sermons at large prov'd unto you, but now Popery is a Religion, that opposes all these Principles of Loyalty so clearly and plainly laid down, and so constantly practic'd by Christ and his Apostles, It sets the Mitre above the Crown, nay above all the Crowns in the World, yea and very insolently tramples them under foot, regarding the Dignity of Princes no more than the meanest things in the World; and for the Truth of this the History of all Christian Kingdoms and States do furnish us with plain and sufficient Examples. With what Luciferian Pride did *Alexander* the Third set his Foot upon the Neck of *Frederick* the Emperor? blasphemously repeating the words of the *Psalmist*, *super Aspidem & Basilicum, thou shalt tread* ^{Psa. 91.13.} *upon the Lion and the Adder, the young Lion and the Dragon shalt thou trample under feet*, to which when the Emperor answer'd *non tibi sed Petro*, I do this Homage not to thee but to *Peter*, the Pope as insolently reply'd to him again, *& mihi & Petro*, thou dost it to us both, to me as well as *Peter*, making himself therein the Emperor's Master, and *St. Peters* equal and Fellow. It was this Pope that made our *Henry* the Second, a Potent Prince in his time, to go three Miles bare-foot, whilst the Blood ran from his tender Feet, to offer at *T. Becket's* Shrine; and there to suffer his Back to be lash'd before he could be absolv'd from his Excommunication, and enjoy his Crown and Dignity in quiet. And whosoever shall oppose this Power that the Popes do still claim shall be cursed with Bell, Book,

and Candle, and if that fails, shall be persecuted with Fire and Sword till they be ruin'd and destroy'd; hence are all those Treasons and Rebellions, those Murders and Villanies that have been set on foot and acted in this Kingdom since the Reformation, by the men of that Hellish and Treasonable Perswasion. But

2. Let us detest this Mystery of Iniquity, because we have known better; and indeed in our Case this ought to be as convincing an Argument as any, for tho' it be a bad thing to be a Papist, yet it is a great deal worse to turn Papist, because that's an Apostacy from God and Christ indeed; how merciful God may be to those that were born and bred such, that suck'd in these Principles in their Education I kno' not, but for those that have been otherwise taught and kno' better, for these to fall off to it must needs make their Condition very dangerous if not desperate indeed, and therefore we shall always find in Scripture the Expressions of Gods Anger against *Israel* sharpened by nothing more, than by their sinning against those Gracious Manifestations of his Spirit and Presence to them; hence is that of the Prophet, *you only have I known of all the Families of the Earth, therefore will I punish you for all your Iniquities*; therefore it is that our Saviour represents the Condition of *Corazin* and *Bethsaida* as worse than that of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, because of those powerful Means of Grace which they had more than the other; nay our Saviour goes on farther and tells them *that if he had not come they had not had sin*; nay St. Paul makes the Recovery of such as difficult as any thing in the World can be, and St. Peter I am sure tells us *That it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after the knowledge of it to turn from the Heavenly Commandment*, and he gives this reason for it, *because the latter End will be worse with them than the Beginning*. their former Ignorance

Amos 2. 3.

Math. 11.
20, &c.John 15.
22.Heb. 6. 4,
5, 6.2 Pet. 2.
20, 21.

norance might have strongly pleaded their Excuse, or at leastwise extenuated their Fault, whereas now the knowledge they have had increaseth their Guilt, and adds weight to their Condemnation; and so it will also do in our Case, if we should now return and lick up that Vomit, which our fore-Fathers cast out, and which we have hitherto pretended such a Loathing of; Apostacy hath been always esteem'd one of the worst kinds of Wickedness, because it hath in it so much of the malicious Resolution of the Will. Errors in Judgment may plead a defect in the Understanding for their Excuse, Transgressions in the Life and Conversation may urge the power of inbred Corruption and the strength of a Temptation for theirs, but the Apostate that sins against Light and Conscience, can have nothing to say for himself; let not us then by any Inducements whatsoever be led away with the Error of the Wicked, and so fall from our own and the Gospel's Steadfastness, but whatever we do let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith without Wavering.

2 Pet. 3.

17.
Heb. 10. 23.

2. Doth this Mystery of Iniquity still work? be exhorted to provide the best you can against the Subtilty and Power of it; and certainly the best Provision we can make in such a Case, is to get on us as the Apostle advises *the whole Armour of God*, and by all means possible to engage him on our side; Our own Experience of his appearing for us hitherto is Encouragement enough to believe and trust him, for as the Psalmist says, *If it had not been the Lord who was on our side when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick when they were so wrathfully displeased at us*; It is neither our Counsel or strength, our Wit or our Guards, nor any thing of our own that hath hitherto preserv'd us, but our help hath been only in the Name of the Lord who made Heaven and Earth; and because except the Lord keep the City the Watchman

Psal. 124.
1, 2, 3.

Psal. 127. 1

waketh but in vain, let us do the best we can to procure him to be our Guardian and Protector still, and the only way to do it is by instant and fervent Prayer, and a Sincere Repentance and Reformation. *Preces & Lacrymæ sunt arma Ecclesiæ.*

1. Then, let us apply our selves to God by fervent and devout Prayer, this hath been always accounted a great Priviledge indeed; the freedom of Access that it gives us unto God at all times, is the greatest Consolation to the Minds of good Men that can be, in that it gives them both a present Ease, and a certain supply to all their Wants. When their Minds are overwhelm'd with Sorrow, and ready to sink under the load of their Miseries, and are ready to burst with Grief, it gives it such a kind and seasonable vent as both Preserves and Cheers it too; it's therefore call'd a *Powering out of the Soul*, which when a true Believer has done like *Hannah*, his *Countenance is no more sad*, He hath made his Case known which is a present ease to him, and he is sure of a supply which is indeed a great Comfort; for it may be truly said of Prayer as it is of *Saul's Sword*, that *it never returns Empty*; this therefore hath been the constant Support and Relief of all Gods People in their Distress, as if the time would permit, I could easily shew from the Examples of *Moses, Job, Samuel, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Josiah, Jeremiah, Jonah*, and *St. Paul*, all which found no greater Comfort in any thing than in this; and indeed as it's the peculiar Priviledge, so it's the peculiar Consolation of the People of God, and therefore it's made one mark of a true Convert, a signal Note of a Child of God, as you may see in the Case of *St. Paul*, to whom *Ananias* is encourag'd to go upon this single Evidence of his Conversion, *For behold he Prayeth.*

2. Let us return to God by sincere Repentance and

and Reformation. This now is as natural, and as necessary a Duty as the other. For if it be Sin that provokes God to destroy Nations and Kingdoms, as certainly it is, then Repentance and Reformation must be the most proper means to prevent it; therefore hence it is that after *Samuel* had told the Children of *Israel* the manner of the Kingdom, and settled the Government of it as well as he could in so little time in the Person of *Saul*, to take them off from that Confidence which made them desire that kind of Government, at first he tells them that for all this, God would destroy them if they did not reform and amend. *But if ye shall still do wickedly ye shall be consumed both you and your King.* Therefore also *Solomon* tells us *That for the Iniquity of a Land many are the Princes of it*, but the Prophet *Jeremiah* goes farther, and tells us, that tho' God promise to bless a Nation or People, yet he will not do it any longer than they endeavour to deserve it; Thus *Daniel* having threatned *Nebuchadnezzar* with the being depriv'd of his Kingdom for some time for his Pride tells him how he may do to prevent it, *viz. by breaking off his sins by Repentance, and his Iniquity by doing of good*: An Example of which we have in the men of *Nineveh*, who believed the Threatning of God, and from a natural Apprehension of Gods readiness to forgive upon Repentance, did really set about the work, and so escaped the danger. Let us then take this good Counsel, and follo' this great Example, that so we may meet with the like Blessing.

3. Is the Kings Life and the Civil Government such a strong Bulwork against this Mystery of Iniquity? Let us bless God that hath made it so; The truth on't is, the Reformation of Religion here in *England* was one of the fairest and justest things that ever

ever was done in that kind ; it hath this Excellency in it to recommend it to our Esteem, and to shew us plainly that there was really a hand of God in it, in that it was done in a most legal way, without the least shew of Tumult and Rebellion ; and therefore it is that the Papists are so angry with the Church of *England*, because they cannot fasten any of their usual Scandals of Faction and Sedition upon it, but as it was at first Establish'd so it is still defended by the Civil Government. The Reformation in other Countries they say (tho' not altogether so truly neither as they would have the World believe) was begun and carried on by Tumults and Disorders, by Rebellion and the expulsion of Princes ; but here now there is not the least Colour or Pretence for such a Charge, ours having been own'd and defended all along by Legal Sanctions and the Power of the Civil Government. Therefore

2. Let us pray daily for the Continuance and Preservation of the same ; we are commanded to *pray for Kings and for all that are in Authority*, and if this was a Duty when the Civil Government was altogether Heathen, it is much more so now it is become Christian. If it was requir'd under bloody Tyrants and Persecutors of the Faith ; much more is it necessary under lawful Kings that are become the Defenders of it ; And indeed at this time we have more than ordinary Reason so to do, considering the Danger which both our King and Government, and by consequence our Religion too are in ; let us then seriously set about the work, and do it heartily and in good earnest, that so this Let may always be in the way, to hinder the farther Growth and Increase of this Mystery of Iniquity here amongst us.

3. Let

3. Let us unite together in Brotherly Love, and Charity amongst our selves ; let us lay aside our private Differences, and provide against the common Danger, that we may no longer strengthen the hands of our Enemies ; for by those we weaken our selves, and help them to get ground upon us, and indeed it is by these that they are most likely to prevail, for if any thing brings in Popery and Ruine amongst us, it will be our unhappy Divisions amongst our selves. Therefore to prevent this

4. Let us Improve and walk Worthy of this great Mystery of Godliness which we do in the Gospel enjoy, that so God may continue it still to us ; He never takes it from any till they Sleight and Contemn it, and there's no such Contempt of it as a walking contrary to all its Methods ; if therefore we esteem it such a Blessing, and desire still to have it, we must live up to it, and by that excellent Change that it makes upon us shew that we do truly value it as it deserves ; we best commend it by our Obedience to it, and we offer the strongest Motives to prevail with God to Establish it amongst us and our Posterity when we thus walk worthy of it. They that bring forth the expected Fruits thereof are those that it is still promis'd to ; God will never suffer his Lights to burn out in waste ; he will soon remove his Candlestick out of its place, when it's made useless to those great and Glorious Ends that he set it up for. Let us therefore consider from whence we are already fall'n, and how far God may suffer us to fall yet, and let that engage us to a sincere Repentance for what is past, and an earnest Endeavour to Reform and Amend for the time to come, that so God may continue to preserve and bless the King and his Government, and to Establish our Religion amongst us against all the Force

Popery, a great Mystery of Iniquity.

Force and Policies both of *Rome* and *Hell*, Which
God of his Infinite Mercy grant for the sake and
in and thro' the Merits and Mediation of *Jesus*
Christ our Lord and only Saviour, *Amen.*

FINIS.